

tree in Andheri (West), a densely populated suburb of Mumbai. They must certainly have been cage escapees. After a gap of about one month, I managed to trace their roost on closely clustered *Artocarpus heterophyllus*, *Syzygium cumini* and *Mangifera indica* trees on a busy street of Andheri. There were nine parakeets which shared this roosting site with other species viz., *Corvus splendens*, *Columba livia* and *Passer domesticus*.

Three years after my first observation, in May 1997, the flock had increased to 15 individuals. One of the most interesting observations was that of a bird entering a hole in a wall at a height of 15 m. Perhaps these

parakeets have started breeding in the Mumbai region.

Near Mumbai, an excellent patch of forest exists in Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP), which is linked to the Western Ghats through other forest patches of Tungreshwar, Matheran and Lonavala. It is likely that the redbreasted parakeet will establish itself and may even spread through the Western Ghats. If so, it will be interesting to study the repercussion on the local birds.

June 27, 1997

ANISH P. ANDHERIA
2, Sagar Building,
V.P. Road, Andheri (W),
Mumbai-400 058.

9. SIGHTING OF HODGSON'S FROGMOUTH *BATRACHOSTOMUS HODGSONI HODGSONI* (G.R. GRAY) FROM SIKKIM

The Hodgson's Frogmouth *Batrachostomus hodgsoni* has been recorded as very rare in Sikkim. Found in the Great Rangit Valley by Hodgson and at Namchi (c. 1500 m altitude) by Mandelli (Ali, 1962 THE BIRDS OF SIKKIM, OUP) over a hundred years ago, it was not recorded by Ali (1962) during his visit to Sikkim in 1955.

On November 30, 1994 at around 1100 h one male frogmouth was sighted at Pabong about 4-5 km from Singtam (c. 500 m) on the way to Namchi, by the second author, a forest officer and keen local birdwatcher. The bird flew down and alighted about 6 m from the jeep, beside the road at the turning just above Pabong River.

The area is a relatively undisturbed patch of evergreen forest of *Schima wallichii* and *Dysoxylum* sp. In September-October 1996, the

area was visited briefly in connection with a lowland forest survey. The entire lower stretches of the Teesta and Rangit Valleys (450-500 m.) were surveyed, but in both areas the species was not sighted. Hence the above sighting was a lucky encounter with this very rare species.

February 11, 1997

USHA GANGULI-LACHUNGPA
Project Officer (Wildlife),
Sikkim Forest Department,
Deorali 737 102, Gangtok.
SUDHIZONG LUCKSOM, SFS
Divisional Forest Officer (West),
Land-use & Environment,
Sikkim Forest Department,
Deorali 737 102, Gangtok.

10. WOODPECKERS FEEDING ON CASSIA PODS

Cassia fistula is a fairly common tree at the Peechi-Vazhani Wildlife Sanctuary (WLS), its long cylindrical pods are characteristic of this tree. On several occasions, all through my study (1991-1993), I found two species of woodpeckers

— Mahratta (*Picoides mahrattensis*) and Heartspotted (*Hemicircus canente*) associating with the pods of this tree. They were seen pecking the dry, dark-coloured pods and often spent several minutes at a stretch on these pods. Several

Pods were noticed with a series of holes in them. The birds appeared to avoid the green, fresh pods and concentrated on the drier dark pods. Curious to find out what was attracting the birds to the pods, I collected some and broke them open. I discovered tiny larvae in two of the pods. I handed over these specimens to Dr. George Mathew, Entomologist, Kerala Forest Research Institute, Peechi, who reared them and found them to be larvae of a micro-lepidopteran species, which could not be identified. This indicated that the birds were not pecking at the pods for their pith, as I had earlier suspected.

Ganguli (1975) had earlier reported that Mahratta woodpeckers had made holes in all the dry *Cassia fistula* pods in her garden in New Delhi, but was not sure if it was for the pith or

for insects. Balasubramanian (1991) had reported redvented bulbuls (*Pycnonotus cafer*) pecking at pods of *Cassia fistula* at Point Calimere and suggested they did so to feed on the pulp of the pods.

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V. SANTHARAM
68, 1st Floor,
Santhome High Road,
Chennai 600 028.

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11. DRUMMING FREQUENCY IN WOODPECKERS

Drumming is extensively used by woodpeckers in the social context, to announce their territories and locate potential mates (Short LL. 1982 WOODPECKERS OF THE WORLD, Delaware Museum of Natural History). However, as most species maintain territories round the year, they may resort to this instrumental signalling throughout the year. I have recorded the drumming of woodpeckers at my study site in Peechi Vazhani Wildlife Sanctuary from September 1991 to May 1992 (see Table 1).

The table shows the number of days on which drumming was recorded. From this, it is evident that the large goldenbacked woodpecker (*Chrysocolaptes lucidus*) and rufous woodpecker (*Celeus brachyurus*) were the most consistent drummers, followed by pygmy woodpeckers (*Picoides nanus*), in terms of total number of days

TABLE 1

DRUMMING FREQUENCY OF WOODPECKERS IN DIFFERENT MONTHS

Month	Days	PY	MA	HS	YN	SB	RU	GB	MG	UN
Sep.	21	2	-	2	1	1	2	-	9	8
Oct.	21	1	-	-	-	-	2	1	13	5
Nov.	11	1	-	-	-	-	2	-	3	5
Dec.	22	5	4	-	-	-	7	1	3	3
Jan.	31	6	3	-	-	-	1	3	2	16
Feb.	22	2	3	-	-	2	6	1	7	2
Mar.	23	2	3	-	-	2	-	-	4	12
Apr.	22	1	-	-	-	2	2	4	9	4
May	22	-	-	-	-	2	2	3	6	9
Total	195	20	13	2	1	9	24	13	56	64

PY : *Picoides nanus* SB : *Picus xanthopygaeus*
 MA : *Picoides mahrattensis* RU : *Celeus brachyurus*
 HS : *Hemicircus canente* GB : *Dinopium benghalense*
 YN : *Picus chlorolophus* MG : *Chrysocolaptes lucidus*
 UN : Unidentified